

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 00111 111134Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /074 W
-----111151Z 003387 /14

P R 111000Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6511

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

UNCLAS COLOMBO 0111

BANGKOK FOR CORRY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,ELAB, CE

SUBJECT: PRESS CENSORSHIP IMPOSED ON STRIKE NEWS

REF COLOMBO 99 (NOTAL)

1. THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY IMPOSED PRESS CENSORSHIP JANUARY 10 ON NEWS RELATED TO STRIKES IN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES RIDGEWAY TILLEKERATNE, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, WAS APPOINTED COMPETENT AUTHORITY TO PASS ON ALL SUCH NEW BEFORE PUBLICATION.

2. MORNING DAILY MIRROR JANUARY 11 HAD SEVERAL BLANK SPOTS ON FIRST PAGE MARKED "CENSORED" BUT NEVERTHELESS PRINTED LEAD STORY SPECULATING ON ROLE IN STRIKE OF COMMUNIST PARTY (CP), CAUGHT BETWEEN DEMANDS OF WORKING CLASS AND OF ITS COALITION PARTNER, THE RULING SRI LANKA
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FREEDOM PARTY (SLEP). ARTICLE STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED THE USE OF THE WORD "STRIKE", REFERRING INSTEAD TO THE "SITUATION." LAKE HOUSE PRESS GROUP PUBLISHED AS USUAL WITH NO DELETIONS SINCE IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ADHERING TO THE GOVERNMENT LINE. THE CP AND LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP) SINHALA-LANGUAGE DAILIES, WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED THE STRIKE, APPEARED WITH 50 PERCENT WHITE SPACE, THE LATTER WITH THE NOTATION "NIBBLED AWAY BY COMPENTENT AUTHORITY". NEVERTHELESS,

THE LSSP DAILY DID GET AWAY WITH PRINTING SOME INFORMATION ABOUT NEW STRIKES.

3. TEXT OF GOVERNMENT PRESS CENSORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWS:

"1. NO PERSON SHALL PUBLISH ANY SUCH DOCUMENT, AS IS DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE (BELOW)

A) UNLESS IT HAS FIRST BEEN PASSED FOR PUBLICATION BY A COMPETENT AUTHORITY; AND

B) EXCEPT IN THE FORM IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN SO PASSED;

2. A PERSON SHALL, BEFORE PUBLISHING ANY SUCH DOCUMENT AS IS DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE, SUBMIT IT TO, OR EXHIBIT IT BEFORE, A COMPETENT AUTHORITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF HAVING IT PASSED FOR PUBLICATION;

3) IN THESE DIRECTIONS--"COMPETENT AUTHORITY" MEANS A COMPETENT AUTHORITY APPOINTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REGULATION 14 OF THE EMERGENCY (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS AND POWERS) REGULATIONS, NO. 12 OF 1976; AND "DOCUMENT" INCLUDES ANY NEWSPAPER, JOURNAL, MAGAZINE, PAMPHLET, POSTER OR OTHER PUBLICATION."

4. THE SCHEDULE MENTIONED IN THE TEXT LISTS "ALL NEWS, COMMENT, OPINION, PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION, PHOTOGRAPH OR OTHER MATTER RELATING TO (A) THE ACTIVITY OF ANY PERSON OR GROUP OF PERSONS ENGAGED OR EMPLOYED IN AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE; (B) ANY TRADE UNION ACTIVITY IN AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE; OR (C) ANY ACTION TAKEN BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES TO MAINTAIN AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE."

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5. TILLEKARATNE, THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS DO NOT APPLY TO TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGES TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. SUCH MESSAGES ARE REPORTEDLY NOW BEING SENT NORMALLY, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SOME DELAY RESULTING FROM CONFUSION WITHIN THE POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT OVER INTERPRETATION OF THE CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS.
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Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
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